CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A method for predicting survival of an organism, said method comprising:

a) determining telomere length of said organism; and

b) correlating said telomere length with mortality risk associated with telomere length in a population of the organism.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein in said organism is human.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein telomere length is the average telomere length.

4. The method according to claim 3, wherein said average telomere length is determined by polymerase chain reaction.

5. The method according to claim 1, wherein said telomere length is determined from blood.

6. The method according to claim 1, wherein said telomere length is determined from lymphoid cells.

7. The method according to claim 7, wherein said lymphoid cells comprise T cells.

8. The method according to claim 1, wherein said population is age matched with said individual organism.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein said aged matched population is within about 10 human years of the age of said individual organism.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein said aged matched population is within about 5 human years of the age of said individual organism.

11. The method according to claim 1 wherein said mortality is from infectious diseases.

12. The method according to claim 1, wherein said mortality is from vascular disease.

13. The method for predicting survival of an organism, said method comprising:

a) determining the rate of telomere length decrease of said organism: and

b) correlating said rate of decrease with mortality risk associated with rate of telomere length decrease in a population of the organism.